

# BURNAWAY

*Timeshare* at SECCA, Winston-Salem

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Installation view of *Timeshare*. Courtesy the artist and SECCA.

Jillian Mayer's *Timeshare* feels like a party that has just ended. It is the garishly-colored refuse of unfettered industrial capitalism melted down and repackaged as a solution for our impending end-of-days. The end-of-days catalyst *Timeshare* tackles is climate collapse—something Miami-based Mayer has witnessed at an accelerated rate. Yet rather than approaching the subject with doom and gloom, she chooses humor and absurdity. Mayer refuses to employ the kind of humor that can be brushed aside and ignored. Instead, she creates an immersive, multimedia experience that requires engagement.

When viewers enter the gallery, they are greeted with a projected image of a blue sky with the sky-written message, “You’ll be okay.” Armed with this affirmation, visitors are free to roam the space, which is filled with works that undercut it. There is a healthy mix of wall-mounted and in-the-round sculptures that hold plants or act as benches. All are crudely rendered from epoxy resin and painted in muddled rainbow colors, like smeared sheet cake icing. It is cheerful in palette, yet off-putting in form. There is a distinct sense that the detritus of our society’s wretched excess has been repurposed out of necessity. Once viewers reach *Flag* (2018), this sense becomes very plain. In it, the words “A sculpture can be used as a flotation device,” are spelled out in fragments of nylon rope on a large, subtly tie-dyed tarp.

*Timeshare* also includes work that is less functional and more ambient. The exhibition space is peppered with *Sand Clumpies*, for example, which look like serpents or inch worms. Because they are on the floor, they could be easy to trip over, adding to the atmosphere of post-party disorder. They are whimsical but obviously part of the purposely clunky attempt to remake a destroyed ecosystem. Semi-representational, dream-like landscape paintings seem to serve a similar purpose. It’s as if one has walked into a stage set created by an imaginative child. We may have exhausted this earth’s flora and fauna, but look, we can recreate them, the show seems to say.

This reimagining of nature takes another intriguing form in one bench entitled *Large Serotonin Fountain with Bench* (2019.) One section of this bench contains a built-in planter. The planter holds three snake plants, which are still in the plastic pots they came in, despite being buried in soil. Is Mayer highlighting the myriad of ways we fumble to bring nature inside and preserve it by leaving the temporary pots? Is she pointing to the way we fawn over our houseplants and backyard gardens while we dump greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere every morning on the way to work or drink a superfood green

smoothie out of a single-use plastic cup to feel healthy? *Timeshare* certainly invites these questions, but nevertheless leaves them unanswered.



Installation view, *Timeshare*. Photo courtesy the artist and SECCA.

Mayer makes use of video elements in her nature simulation, as well. On one side of the gallery, a monitor plays a looped video of a speedboat driving in a perfect circle. The boat is shown from a bird's eye view, so the shape of its wake is clearly visible. Its title, *Human Nature* (2020), makes it a clear jab at humanity's futility and frivolity in the face of crisis. In another part of the gallery, there is a video of the tide lapping at silver letters stuck in the sand that spell out "real estate." By the video's end, the letters have been washed away or knocked down. *Beach Real Estate, fine by me* (2019) is clearly a comment on the senselessness of coastal development. Taken with the rest of the show, both videos solidify the critique behind the outlandish sculptures and paintings.

*Timeshare* is not an easy exhibition to take in. Between the raw, lurid nature of the sculptures, the surreal landscapes, and the bemusing videos, the result is nauseating. This nausea is *Timeshare's* strength. Climate change is

nauseating and our inability to reverse it even more so. Attempts made in late stage capitalism are laughable at best, much like the satirical solutions presented here. So what are we to do? *Timeshare* provides no real answers, but perhaps visitors will walk away from the show beginning to divine their own.

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Jillian Mayer's [Timeshare](#) is on view through September 26.